

Talking Points for NFIB Meeting

19 January 1984

Report on DCI role in warning drew upon Community experience with May 79 DCID, discussions in the Warning Working Group, and interviews with several dozen senior people with warning responsibilities or recent warning experience. The report reflects a wide range of opinions and options for change.

The Warning Working Group believes the main issues are:

- How broadly or narrowly one should define the mission of a national warning system is discussed in paragraph 35. The present, broad "no surprise on major security issues" or a narrow, "warning of increasing readiness or intent to attack US or US forces." Or something in between. Majority of working group favored broad definition.
- Administrative and substantive procedures and process involved in integrating the disparate warning activities throughout the Community and supplementing them. Essentially a question of the present mandate, less than or greater than as described in paragraph 36 of the report. None of the Warning Working Group indicated fundamental problems with any of these options.
- Structure of the national warning system. This is discussed in paragraph 37 and pertains to staff structures which are largely a function of Community support and participation in a national warning system. Majority view of working group was in direction of expanded Community support and participation.
- Options for management discussed in paragraph 38-39 concern oversight and direction of the national warning system effort below the DCI. Working group opinion favored continuation of traditional DDCI role, forming a new warning staff successor to the SWS, and having the Chairman NIC or DDI double-hatted as the DCI's senior warning officer.

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INR VIEWS ON THE NATIONAL WARNING QUESTION

The following comments reflect INR's views on the national warning question, and suggest an appropriate approach which takes into account existing institutions, structures and procedures:

DEFINING THE WARNING MISSION

We envisage "warning" in the broadest sense as falling into three slices: Big W; Little W; and No Surprise. "Big W" relates to possible attack on the US, its forces overseas or its allies; "Little W" refers to all other crises involving a threat of initiation of hostilities. Both Big and Little W involve similar methodology of indications intelligence; taken together they constitute a distinct professional discipline. A "No Surprise" doctrine includes, in addition to Big and Little W, a wide array of other events of substantial importance to US policy and interests. It also involves a broad range of disciplines, including political, military, economic, sociological, and scientific and technical.

The "warning" writ should be as wide (including "no surprise") as can be efficiently and effectively undertaken. We think that current institutions and procedures, newly sensitized, can adequately handle even the elements of a "no surprise" requirement. On the other hand, those elements of the system dedicated to handling problems arising from possible attack on the US and other threats of initiation of hostilities (Big and Little W) should not be burdened with the tasks implied by a "no surprise" doctrine. That is the task of the DCI and the Intelligence Community as a whole.

ORGANIZING FOR WARNINGA. THE ROLE OF THE DCI

As the President's Senior Intelligence Officer, the DCI has responsibility for National Intelligence Warning, most importantly strategic warning, but he must also oversee the entire effort.

B. THE CHAIRMAN, NIC

The Chairman of the National Intelligence Council should be the DCI's action officer for this effort, including ensuring coordination of all the "no surprise" situations and

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Alert Memoranda through the regional and functional NIO network.

Specifically, the Chairman, NIC, should be responsible for ensuring that NIOs exert the necessary estimative discipline so that all interagency products--including Alert Memoranda--specify to the extent possible what events are or are not likely, why such a judgment has been reached, and what indications there might be to suggest that such events were becoming more or less likely.

C. THE NIO/WARNING

Since Big and Little W situations overlap regional NIOs, and include either or both NIOs responsible for general purpose and theater forces and strategic programs, and because I&W intelligence constitutes a discrete discipline, the NIO/W should be a special assistant to the Chairman, NIC, with specific responsibility for warning of possible hostilities or other threatening military activities. The NIO/W, working with the regional and functional NIOs, as agent for the Chairman, NIC, would be charged with applying to all interagency efforts related to Big and Little W the same estimative discipline through the I&W prism as noted above for the Chairman, NIC.

One task would be to assure that the monthly meetings held by the various NIOs were more effectively used in support of the warning mission. NIO/W or one of his staff would review the agenda, attend the monthly meetings, and ensure that there was a specific warning component in the product. In particular, the NIO/W and his staff would contribute indications lists on specific crises or problems. The main responsibility of the NIO/W and his staff at NIO monthly warning meetings should be to provide the analytical basis in support of what indications to look for next if a situation deteriorates. This would sensitize the Community and provide additionally needed focus and emphasis on warning. NIO meetings and/or the warning products from them could be issued once per month, or more frequently as required.

NIO/W should ensure that NIEs, SNIEs, IIMs and other IC products are as supportive as possible of warning requirements, and that issues and questions relevant to

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warning are appropriately covered in these papers, NIO/W should participate in the production schedule, should propose special studies as he deems required, and should work with the other NIOs to see that warning is adequately addressed in any study.

NIO/W and his staff would also work closely with NFAC and the other producers of current intelligence and longer range analysis and assessments to enhance general sensitivity to warning and its requirements. Specifically, the NIO/W and his staff could generate I&W studies of strategic attack on the US, as well as additional potential regional warning situations beyond Europe and Korea (e.g., the Middle East, Southwest Asia, Southeast Asia).

Further, basic studies on I&W methodology should be undertaken. Such work should aim to focus Community attention on developments which will change warning assessments, either to deny indications or to create opportunities to develop or exploit new ones. NIO/W could also usefully participate in planning in the arms control field on measures relating to warning enhancement, e.g., confidence building measures in CDE, and associated measures in MBFR.

Although requests for Alert Memoranda can come from any quarter, the NIO/W has a special responsibility for those involving potential military actions. Current procedures for producing AMs seem adequate.

NIO/W should develop new training opportunities specifically geared to I&W. He should assist in the development of courses within the Intelligence Community.

D. WARNING STAFF

With the Strategic Warning Staff already under the NIO/W's aegis, it would make sense for these resources to be designated as the "Warning Staff" responsible for supporting the NIO/W in the tasks outlined above. A principal task for these resources (as specified in DCID 1/5) should be the strategic warning mission.

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The NIO/W and his staff should have sufficient resources to monitor, coordinate and enhance US intelligence activities related to warning of military action, but all within the general managerial structure and the substantive programs that fall under the Chairman, NIC.

E. WARNING WORKING GROUP

The Warning Working Group should be maintained as the interagency managerial network to prepare and coordinate responses and proposals to NFIB on warning matters.

SOME THOUGHTS ON ALTERNATIVE ANALYSIS AND DEVIL'S ADVOCACY

There is a tendency to equate alternative analysis with devil's advocacy. There is a difference, however, and blurring the two leads to unfortunate confusion.

The Community has always valued alternative analysis. The different agencies provide insurance against missed alternative hypotheses because each agency--by role and responsibility--is sensitive to one or more of the repercussions of possible developments. DIA and the Services, for example, are the eyes and ears of those responsible for meeting and defeating a possible attack. Their role forces them to examine worst case possibilities. INR, in the same fashion, must be alert to situations requiring diplomatic actions and has a stake in avoiding an overreaction to ambiguous indications. Similarly, CIA and NSA have a stake in adequate collection and analysis; Treasury and DOE each have specific responsibilities and roles which sensitize them to potential developments.

On the other hand, to provide for judgments that are characterized only by institutionalized pessimism is to develop an entity responsible not to be better or to be right but only to be different. It would amount to transferring the responsibility for reviewing all hypotheses from the line intelligence services--where it is and should remain--to a

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special staff with a role of warning for the sake of warning. It is to suggest that the DCI not demand what he should demand of the various agencies. It is also to ensure that the Community will speak with two voices and that warning, will always be ambiguous.

THE ALLIES AND WARNING

Considerable progress has been made over the last several years with our NATO allies, particularly the key ones, on warning questions. Even so, the sharing of warning information and the philosophy of warning probably deserve a current look. However, it would be diverting to burden this NFIB with discussion of the subject. It might first be addressed by the WWG.

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